

## Understanding ICRA

In a healthcare facility thousands fall victim every year to infections caused by dust stirred up during construction projects. Patient Care is everything; we need to work at a higher standard to keep patients safe. Construction dust can cause infections, allergic reactions, worsen breathing, clog medical instruments and clog fire safety devices.

What is ICRA?

ICRA stands for Infection Control Risk Assessment. The ICRA plan is needed for any work affecting or around patients, hospital staff, patient care devices/equipment and/or building services directly impacting personnel.

ICRA Key Items:

1. Impact of work on area
  2. Entry and exit of workers from jobsite.
  3. Containment of jobsite and materials.
  4. Monitoring of site for infection control.
  5. Clean up of Jobsite
1. Preplanning question to determine impact of work:
    - How is the project impacting or disrupting the environment around patients and employees work areas?
    - Are there specific work hazards and what protection level is needed for each identified hazard?
    - Where is the work in relation to patient areas? What is the susceptibility of those patients to infection and illness?
  2. Proper entry and exit procedures:
    - Use sticky mats at upon exit from jobsite .
    - Take the time to change sticky mats when they are visibly dirty.
    - In sensitive areas wear protective clothing as required before entering.
    - When leaving the jobsite take care to change clothing and work boots. At a minimum make an effort to remove as much dust as possible from clothing.
    - Ensure entry doors are not propped open and remain closed at all times.
    - All corridors must be kept clean and under constant maintenance.
  3. Containment of jobsite and materials:
    - Seal unused doors with tape/plastic and or hard partitions.
    - Construct barriers using sheetrock partitions, plastic hard partitions (edge guard) or plastic to separate jobsite from non-work areas. (Note: soft plastic with zippers may only be used for less than 72 hours)
    - Use HEPA-filters for dust control and maintaining negative air flow in work area. During extended use make sure to change HEPA-filters as needed to keep space free of dust.
    - Cap or install filters on all existing duct work openings in area of work.
    - All materials must be brought into the jobsite clean and covered in plastic. Any materials leaving the jobsite must also be covered in plastic. Wheels of carts and dollies should be cleaned before exiting.
    - When using HEPA carts for single shift work in public areas:
      - o Carts must be kept clean and manned when active.
      - o Carts must make positive connection to ceiling before work in the ceiling can begin.
      - o At all times when ceiling is open must be under negative pressure.
  4. Monitoring for infection control:
    - During the course of any work shift the infection control barriers must be checked periodically and repaired/cleaned as needed.
    - All work spaces are to remain negative to the surrounding spaces during any working shift, and if needed permanently for the duration of the project.
    - All site doors are used for access while still maintaining negative air and cannot be propped, wedged open or blocked. Leaving a site access door open will diminish the effectiveness of the negative air in the site allowing construction dust to leave the area.
    - Remember active hospital areas are dust free zones; therefore, HEPA vacuums or HEPA filters must be used at all times.
    - In situation where coveralls are required in work areas, coveralls must be removed before exiting and worn upon entering.
    - Sticky mats or walk off mats are required on all sites. These mats help to remove the dust that accumulates on our work boots when we leave the construction site. Taking the time to take a few extra steps on these mats when leaving the site can go a long way to limiting the spread of construction dust.
  5. Clean up of jobsite:
    - It is important that work areas are cleaned prior to and after dust/debris barriers are removed. Removing barrier before the work area is properly cleaned can expose patients and staff to dust that was inside the site.
    - Taking the time to wipe down any surfaces adjacent to the work area will help control any dust that may have left the work area.
    - Long term projects should be maintained continuously for cleanliness during work hours to prevent the spread of dust. Sites should be thoroughly cleaned and wet mopped if possible at the end of every shift.

